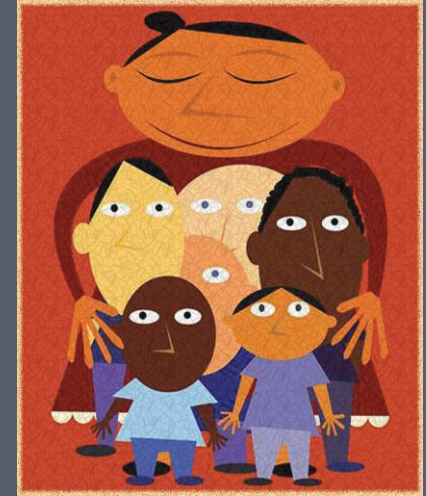Student Health and Human Services
Pupil Services and Attendance

Foster Care Program and Neglected, Delinquent or At Risk Youth Program

District and Foster Youth Information
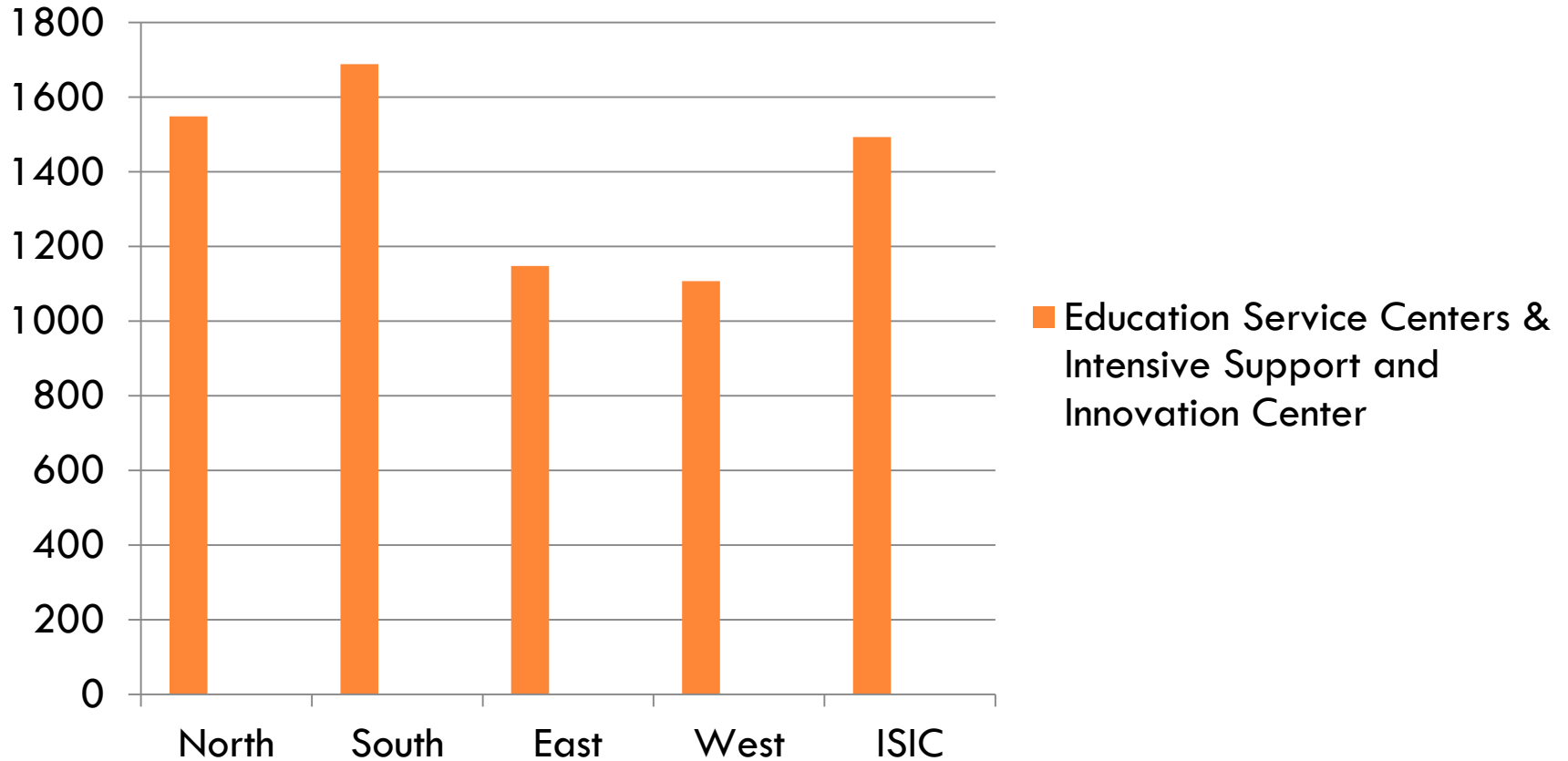
Los Angeles Unified School District

- Second largest school district in the nation.

- the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) enrolls more than 640,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

- Over 900 schools, and 187 public charter schools.

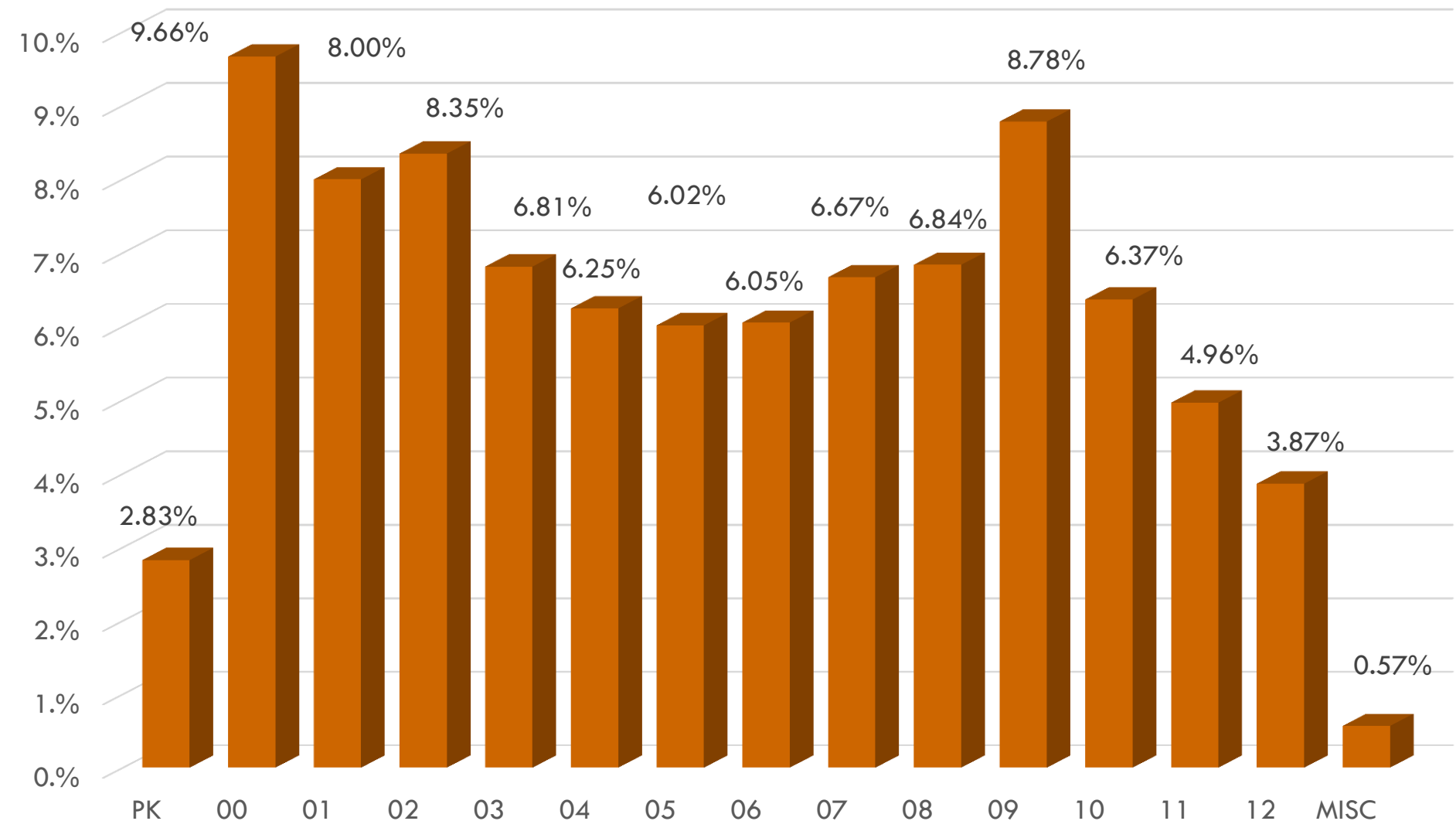- The boundaries spread over 720 square miles.

- ### _Foster Youth Facts:_

- Last data match showed there were 8,278 Foster Youth attending LAUSD Schools.

- The highest concentration of foster youth are located in ESC South

- The highest concentration of High School Students are 9th Graders.

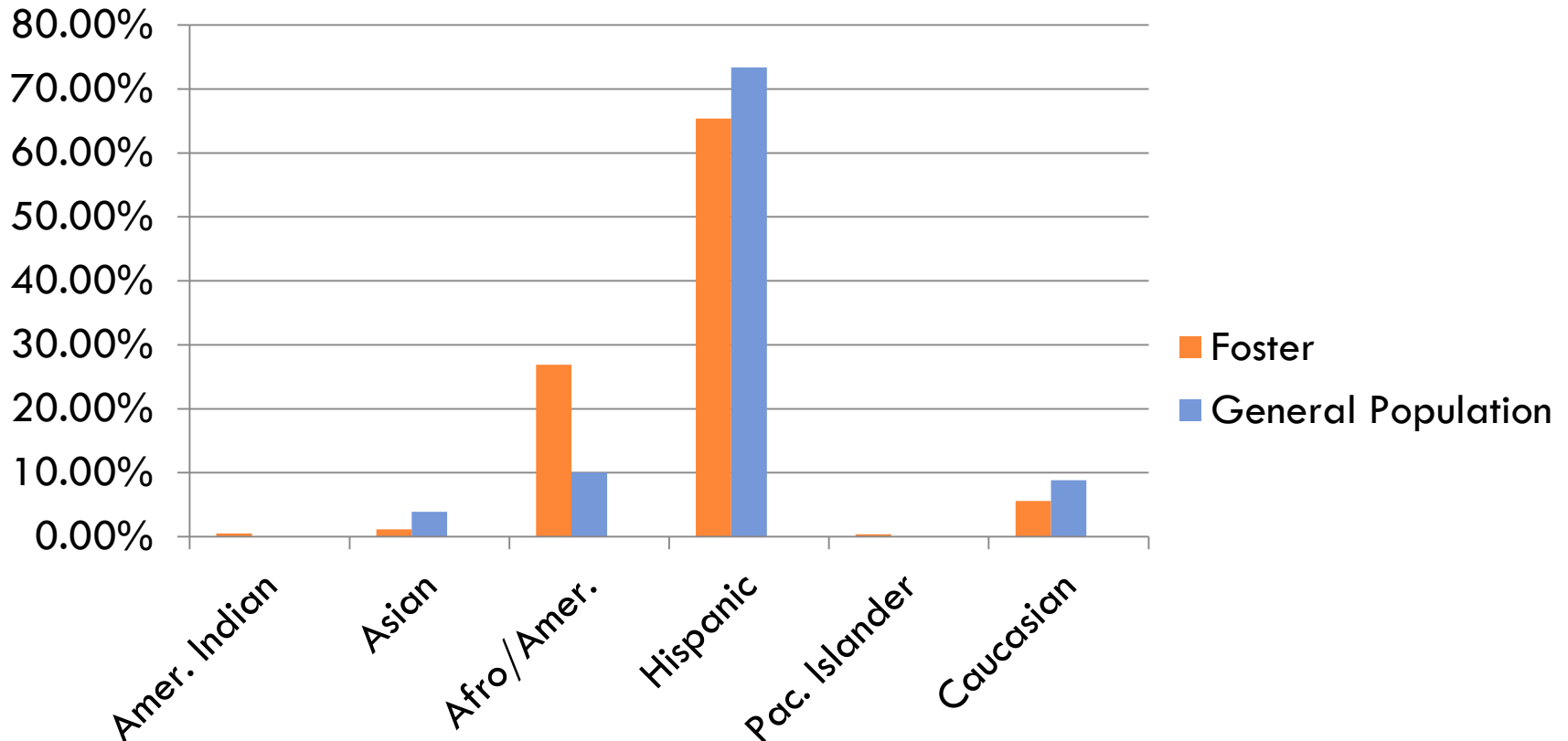- Disproportionate number of African-American youth.

Foster Youth Data – 2013

Education Service Centers and Intensive Support and Innovation Center

LAUSD Foster Students by Grade Level

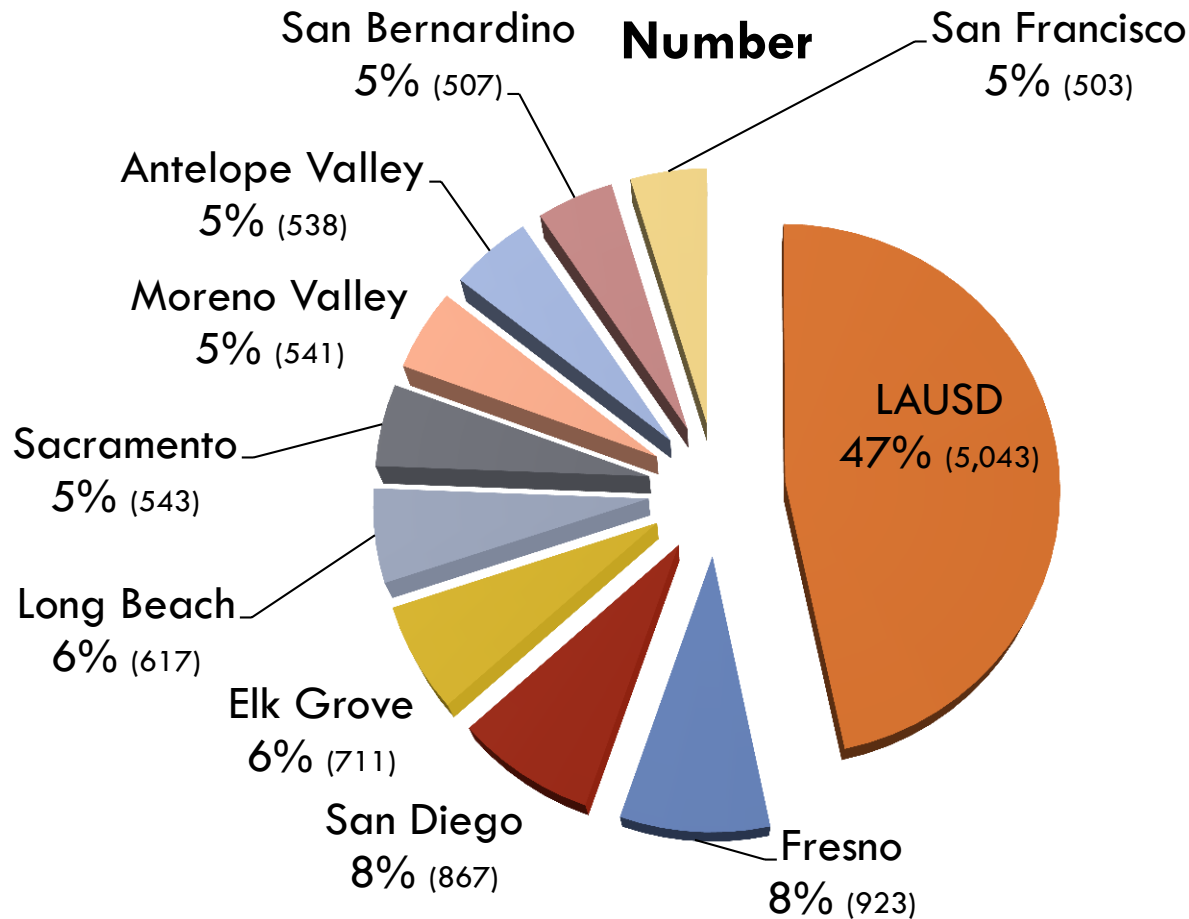# Comparison of Foster Youth and General Population by Ethnicity

10 California Districts with the highest concentration of Foster Youth 2009/10- West Ed.

Number

- San Bernardino 5% (507)
- San Francisco 5% (503)
- Antelope Valley 5% (538)
- Moreno Valley 5% (541)
- Sacramento 5% (543)
- Long Beach 6% (617)
- Elk Grove 6% (711)
- San Diego 8% (867)
- Fresno 8% (923)
- LAUSD 47% (5,043)

The Importance of Education

Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection Mandate states:

Children and families should be supported so that all children are ultimately able to reach their full potential.

We know that education is vital to the success of all children, but children and youth in foster care are particularly vulnerable to educational challenges that negatively impact their academic success.

To break the cycle of poverty and abuse, we need to pay more attention to the educational outcomes for our youth. We know that investments in education are the most effective means to deter crime, and lower incarceration rates, and to reduce poverty and unemployment.

Adult Outcomes for Foster Youth

Within the first 2-4 years after emancipation:

- ## 51% are unemployed
- ## 40% are on public assistance
- ## More than 33% are homeless
- ## One in five will be incarcerated

Young adults ages 18-24 years old 2.5 to 4 years after leaving foster care: Cook, R. (1992). Are we helping foster care youth prepare for the future? *Children and Youth Services Review*. 16(3/4), 213-229. Cook, R.; Fleishman, E., & Grimes, V. (1989). *A National Evaluation of Title IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth* (Phase 2 Final Report, Volume 1). Rockville: Westat, Inc.

Challenges for Foster Youth

- Lack of home and school stability.

- Many foster youth perform below grade level and are academically at-risk of not graduating.

- Many are in need of additional support to succeed (both academic and social emotional support)

- Behavior challenges due to the trauma/neglect/abuse experienced.

- Schools report a lack of attendance at education meetings for foster and group home youth.

- Foster Youth need to be properly checked out of school.

2013 Report by The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (West Ed) 2009/2010 School Data

"The Invisible Achievement Gap: *Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools*" found:

- Student s in foster care more likely to be African-American

- More likely to be classified with a disability (learning disabilities, emotional disturbance).

- Students were older for their grade level (especially grades 9-12, possibly due to retention, and increasing the risk factor for dropping out)

- More likely to change schools during the school year

- More likely to be enrolled in the lowest performing schools

- Statewide testing (California Standards Test/CST) showed an achievement gap for students in foster care- students performance on these test determine if they are testing as advanced, proficient, basic, below basic or far below basic (according to the report foster youth struggle with English Language Arts, Elementary Math, Algebra I and II)

- High School students tend to have a higher dropout rate and a lower graduation rate (according to the report foster youth experience more challenges passing the Calif. High School Exit Exam / CAHSEE)

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

Los Angeles Unified School District

The Foster Care Program

- Specialized unit in LAUSD Pupil Services Branch
- Provide advocacy and other services to youth in out-of-home care.
- Create District Policy and help our schools to implement current laws/legislation.
- Provide training and technical support to caregivers, schools, district staff and community agencies.
- Collaborate with agencies involved in the care of foster youth (Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Probation, Department of Mental Health, Community Agencies, etc.)
- Coordinate Pathways to College Program for Foster and Probation Youth.

LAUSD WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Los Angeles Unified School District

Working Together

- Currently working on electronic data sharing pilot
- Gloria Molina Project on LAUSD School Sites
- LAUSD Education Liaisons & DCFS Education Liaisons work together on difficult cases.
- Student Tracers to DCFS Workers
- Work with ILP staff to advocate for student resources (for high school seniors, and for students interested in attending college).
- Cross-training with ILP staff (Counselors, Para-professionals and Group Home Caregivers).
- In the past LAUSD Foster Care Program worked with SPA 4 on a pilot project with youth case managed by our Student Intervention Program

DISTRICT POLICIES
&
LEGISLATION

Los Angeles Unified School District

Current District Policies & Laws

Foster Youth

- Policy Bulletin 787.1- Enrollment of Students Living in Out-Of-Home Care
- AB 490- Foster Youth

Probation Youth

- Policy Bulletin 5553.01 Enrollment of Students Returning From Juvenile Justice Facilities and Other Placements
- SB 1088

District Resources/Practices

- Foster Care Program-

- Although our district has more students than any other school district in California, the law only requires that we have 1 foster care liaison.

- There are currently more resources for youth residing in group homes than in foster homes.

- Additional resources that are created outside of the district, creates more requests for assistance from the district.

NEEDED RESOURCES

Resources Needed

- Additional staff available to do direct services to students
- Instructional/Academic Support
- Assistance with college and job readiness skills
- Mental Health Services (including supportive and trauma counseling)
- Students frequently request access to the internet
- Individual Education Planning
- Care-giver training/resources
- Involvement of community agencies/organizations
- Mentoring /Tutoring Programs
- More resources for High School students
- Prevention Programs
- Space for Training/Programs/Events (free)
- Funding for Buses & Events.

Improving the Interface Between Education and DCFS

- There must be a *process* to improve communication and coordination.
- There needs to be a commitment from both agencies to work together.
- Time must be allocated for staff participation.
- Agencies must share common goals.
- Assign someone to assure that the process is coordinated and continues.

Recommendations

1. Interagency Workgroup to bring together public and private agencies and organizations, and to open the lines of cross system communication.
2. Better Coordination of Care/Resources/Services.
3. On-going review of the data sharing process.
4. Dedicated data position to focus on Foster Youth, and clear guidelines on the sharing of the information with other agencies.
5. Additional support for targeted grades (Early Ed., Kindergarten, 8th, 9th, and 12th graders).
6. Utilizing University Interns/ Faith Based and Community Organizations more.
7. Adding Education as one of the DCFS goals.
8. Annual Conference for training agency staff , caregivers and community partners.

Promising Practices

Recommended by Andrea Zetlin and Lois Weinberg in their book " "*Placed at Risk by the System*"

1. Early Intervention Programs provided by Schools under IDEA.
2. Early Head Start Programs
3. Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care for Preschoolers (MTFC-P)
4. Fostering Individualized Assistance Program (FIAP)- Wraparound program.
5. Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) for foster parents and their children.

In Addition LAUSD has:

1. Educational Liaisons
2. Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools (with an Adaptation for Foster Youth)- School Mental Health Services
3. LAUSD Foster Care Pathways to College Program
4. Endless Dreams- A Casey Family Program used to train school staff about foster youth

Neglected or Delinquent Youth Program Contact Information

Foster Care and Neglected/ Delinquent Youth Program

Coordinator		
Norma Sturgis, LCSW		
(213)241-3848		
Specialist		
Christine Kae, LCSW		
(213)241-0760		

Foster Care Program

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Maral Sousani (Valley)	**(818) 654-5087**
Norlon Davis (Central)	**(213) 241-1273**

Neglected, Delinquent, At-Risk Youth Program

Sonia Avalos (Central)	**(213) 241-3554**
Dolly Harris (Central)	**(213) 241-3551**
Paul Schuster (North)	**(818)654-3635**
Althea Howard (Central)	**(323)421-2885**
Cesar Chaparro (East)	**(213)241-1687**
Dexter Goseng (West)	**(323)421-2914**
Marcia Price (South)	**(310)354-3225**

Cheryl Wong, Secretary   (213) 241-3842

QUESTIONS ?

January 2014